

Real-Life Applications & Problem Solving



Making Historical Judgments

Imagine that you are a cultural geographer. You study the human aspects of geography, especially the location and diffusion of cultures. Your specialty is ancient civilizations and the way in which they continue to influence everyone who lives today.

This week you are attending a conference for cultural geographers in Mexico City—a site that was itself part of a great ancient civilization. The agenda includes a program on the navigational achievements and contributions of early civilizations. You and your colleagues will choose the contributions that you think were most important to both ancient and modern peoples. To help you make an informed judgment about the achievements of early civilizations, you and your colleagues have created the table below.

Complete the table, and then answer the questions that follow.

Civilization	Major Contributions	Importance to Ancient Civilization	Importance to Modern World
Assyrian	developed huge library		
Chinese	developed cartography (mapmaking)		
Egyptian	built boats made of papyrus and, later, wood planks		
Greek	developed system of measurement using sun's angles		
Haida (North America)	developed seaworthy dugout canoes		
Phoenician	navigated by stars		
Inca	built seaworthy balsa rafts; developed centerboard		
Sumerian	developed sailboat; used wheeled vehicles		

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Real-Life Applications & Problem Solving**UNIT 1**

1. Which three contributions do you think are the most important?

2. a. Which contribution do you think is the single most important?

- b. Explain the reason for your choice.

3. What criteria did you use to judge which contributions are most important?

4. Were any of the contributions in the table important to the ancient civilization but not important to the world today? What conclusions might you draw from this?

5. Explain why you agree or disagree with this statement, made by a fellow conference participant: "It is impossible to decide which are the most important contributions because all contributions to civilization are important in different ways."
